

NEWS RELEASE

**OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF ILLINOIS**

**RANDY G. MASSEY
ACTING UNITED STATES ATTORNEY**

Nine Executive Drive, Fairview Heights, Illinois 62208, Telephone (618) 628-3700

For Immediate Release

APRIL 28, 2006

CAHOKIA MAN CONVICTED OF FIREARM AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCE OFFENSES

Randy G. Massey, Acting United States Attorney for the Southern District of Illinois, announced today that following a jury trial that took place from April 19, 2006 through April 26, 2006, in the United States District Courthouse in East St. Louis, Illinois Tavon A. Upton, age 29, of Cahokia, Illinois, was found guilty on April 26, 2006, of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, possession with intent to distribute cocaine base in the form of "crack" cocaine, and possession with intent to distribute cocaine. Upton will be sentenced on July 28, 2006, at 1:30 p.m. in East St. Louis, Illinois.

The evidence at trial established that on July 16, 2003, members of the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department Drug Tactical Unit assisted by the Cahokia, Illinois Police Department and other law enforcement agencies arrived at the defendant's residence in Cahokia, Illinois, to execute a search warrant. Upton, who was standing in his driveway when authorities arrived, immediately fled on foot, but was quickly apprehended and found to be in possession of crack cocaine and cocaine. A search of the defendant's residence conducted pursuant to the search warrant revealed a .380 semi-automatic firearm and other controlled substances.

The offense of being a felon in possession of a firearm carries with it a maximum penalty of 10 years' imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000, or both, and a term of up to 3 years' supervised release. The offense of possession with intent to distribute crack cocaine and cocaine carries with it a maximum penalty of up to 20 years' imprisonment, a \$1,000,000 fine, or both, and a term of supervised release of not less than 3 years.

The investigation was conducted by the St. Clair County Sheriff's Department Drug Tactical Unit and was adopted for federal prosecution by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives.

The case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys James E. Crowe, III and Richard Lloyd in cooperation with the St. Clair County State's Attorney's Office as part of the Project Safe Neighborhoods Initiative of the Department of Justice.